



## **BURGLARY AND ROBBERY PREVENTION FOR RETAIL STORES**

SDPD Crime Prevention

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This paper contains tips for preventing business burglaries and robberies. Burglary is the entry of a business or other property with the intent to commit larceny or any felony. Businesses can prevent burglaries and robberies by protecting assets, preventing unauthorized entry, and employing various deterrent measures. Robbery is the felonious taking of personal property in the possession of another, from his person or immediate presence, and against his will, accomplished by means of force or fear. Robbery is a violent crime and often includes the use of a weapon. Robbers often case businesses for cash on hand and ways to achieve surprise and avoid witnesses. This section also includes tips on what to do if you are robbed and how you can also help in apprehending the offenders and recovering the stolen property.

These tips can significantly enhance the safety of your employees and the security of your business. The SDPD Community Relations Officer (CRO) in your area will be glad to assist you in this by doing a free business security survey. SDPD division addresses and phone numbers are listed at the end of this paper.

You can also authorize the SDPD to act as your agent and enter your property to ask unauthorized persons to leave the property; and if they refuse to do so or return thereafter, to enforce any law violations on the property. To do this you should first talk to your CRO about filing a Letter of Agency. The form for this Letter must be filled out on the SDPD website in the following steps, and filed by clicking on Email Form on the bottom left.

1. Go to **[www.sandiego.gov/police/pdf/2013policecitywidemap.pdf](http://www.sandiego.gov/police/pdf/2013policecitywidemap.pdf)** to find out what Police Division covers the neighborhood in which your property is located.
2. Go to the Letter of Agency form at **[www.sandiego.gov/police/pdf/letterofagency.pdf](http://www.sandiego.gov/police/pdf/letterofagency.pdf)**.
3. Click RESET FORM to get the start and expiration dates.
4. Use the drop down menu to enter the Police Division.
5. Fill in the blue blanks on the form.

You can skip the first step if you know what division covers your property. Then you do the following and click on Email Form on the bottom left.

1. Go to the Letter of Agency form at **[www.sandiego.gov/police/pdf/letterofagency.pdf](http://www.sandiego.gov/police/pdf/letterofagency.pdf)**.
2. Click RESET FORM to get the start and expiration dates.
3. Use the drop down menu to enter the SDPD division that covers your property.
4. Fill in the blue blanks on the form.

Note that the Letter must be renewed every 12 months.

In addition to filing a Letter of Agency as described above, a property owner facing continuing crime problems on his or her property can submit a Citizen Request Form by going to the Forms page on the SDPD website at **[www.sandiego.gov/police/forms/forms.shtml](http://www.sandiego.gov/police/forms/forms.shtml)**, clicking on Citizen Request Form, filling out the Form online with as much information as possible about the problem, and then clicking on the Submit Request button at the bottom of the Form. You can use the Form to request additional patrol and/or to report narcotic activity at a specific address. It will be sent to the responsible Division for review and response as appropriate.

## PROTECTING ASSETS

Assets can be protected by keeping them in a safe place, implementing procedures that deny criminals access to them, etc.

- Locate the cash register where it is visible from the outside, but far enough away from the window so as not to provoke a quick window-smash and grab.
- Protect cashier with a bullet-resistant glass, plastic, or laminate enclosure or window. And install a secure money-pass-through slot or tray.
- Keep a minimum amount of cash in the register. Close registers after each transaction. Lock registers when they are not attended.
- If your cash register is visible from a window or door when your business is closed, remove the money and leave the register drawer open. Burglars may not break it if they see the register is empty.
- Put excess cash in a time-lock drop safe. Keep your safe locked when access is not required.
- Safes can be standing or mounted in floors or walls. Standing safes should be securely anchored to the floor. The back should be against a wall so it will not be accessible. Safes that are visible from outside the building should be well illuminated and have the front (locking side) turned away from the windows. Floor safes should be located where they can be concealed.
- Use burglar-resistant safes for money and other valuables. Use fire-resistant safes for records. Both types should have an Underwriters Laboratories (UL) label with their effectiveness ratings.
- Post signs saying that employees do not have access to the safe.
- Lock up postage meters, check writers, checkbooks, etc. when they are left unattended.
- Be unpredictable about moving money from your business to the bank. Vary the times, routes, and methods of concealment. Make deposits during the business day, not after closing time. Assign two employees to make deposits. Vary the assignments over time. Have the deposit carried in a purse or plain bag; never use a bank bag.
- Have employees do the following when banking:
  - Park as close to the bank door as possible when making a deposit or withdrawal.
  - Conceal withdrawn money before leaving the bank. Don't carry it openly in bank bags, envelopes, or coin boxes.
  - Beware of people in vehicles watching you leave the bank and vehicles following you when you drive away.

- Call **911** on your cell phone if a vehicle follows you, and keep the dispatcher informed of your location. This is legal under California Vehicle Code Sec. 23123(c). Head for the nearest SDPD area station until marked police cars locate you.
- Don't put the money in the trunk if you stop and leave your vehicle.
- Leave the depository if suspicious persons are present. Return later to make the deposit.
- If you use an armored car service, always be prepared for its pickup and delivery.
- Designate two employees to open and close the business. In opening the business one would remain outside and watch the other go in. The observer would call **911** if anyone forces the other to open the door or follows the other into the business. In closing the business one would leave first and watch the other leave. The observer would call **911** if anyone attempts to make the other reopen the business or follows the other leave.
- Have at least two employees working at high-risk times.
- Be especially alert at opening and closing times when the business is not crowded.
- Be careful in dealing with customers who are wearing baseball caps and sunglasses that conceal their faces from surveillance cameras.
- Never open your business for anyone after you have closed.
- Beware of a caller who says that your business has been broken into and asks you to come and secure it. Get the caller's identity and call back to confirm that it was from a SDPD officer or other trusted person before going to your business. The same applies to a caller who says he or she is from your alarm company.
- Keep all entrance and exit doors locked during business hours except those used by the public. Some employees or security personnel should be located to monitor each public entrance. Emergency exits should be alarmed, have delayed-egress hardware, and be designated for emergency use only. Have employees report and close any door found open in areas not accessible to the public.
- Keep the front door locked and install a video intercom so employees can talk to and see people at the door before opening it for them. To prevent tailgating, this door could be mantrap, i.e., a secured space equipped with two interlocking doors to insure that only one person can pass through into the business.
- Post signs to indicate areas that are open to the public and those that are for employees only. Install locks on all doors to interior work areas to control public access. Doors to storage and supply rooms, and individual offices should be kept locked when unattended.
- Check all restrooms and other areas at closing time to make sure no one is hiding in them.
- Have the last employee to leave at closing time check that all doors and windows are secured and locked, sign a sheet posted near the burglar alarm that the business is secure, and turn on the alarm.
- Have all employees wear ID badges or some other means of distinguishing them from visitors, customers, and others on the premises. Businesses with restricted areas should give their employees photo-ID badges that are color-coded to indicate the areas that the employee is authorized to enter. Offices, storage and supply rooms, and other work areas should be checked periodically for the presence of unauthorized persons.
- Keep doors to public restrooms locked or under observation to prevent abuse of the facilities.
- Anchor computer hardware and other costly items of office equipment to a desk or install an alarm that sounds when they are moved. Otherwise store the equipment in a secure place when it is not in use.
- Keep items stored outside at least 8 feet from perimeter walls and fences. Forklifts, moving equipment, and other vehicles that can easily be started should be made inoperable.
- Park company vehicles in a secure fenced area when the business is closed. If this is not possible, park them close to each other or against the building to help prevent gas siphoning, battery theft, and vehicle break-ins. They can also be parked in front of doors to prevent building break-ins.
- Keep shipments inside until they are to be loaded on trucks.
- Open loading dock doors only when shipments are being sent out or brought in. Keep the doors locked at other times.
- Install a service bell for truck drivers to use to announce their arrival.
- Locate ATMs away from windows and other easy break-in places. The back of the business is better. And use a bolt-down kit in addition to ground bolts to anchor the ATM to the floor.
- Keep as little cash as possible in the ATM and remove the cash when the business is unattended.
- Do the following if the ATM is located outside the business: use a bolt-down kit in addition to ground bolts, keep the surrounding area well lighted at night, install firmly-cemented bollards around the ATM to prevent a vehicle from hitting it, and install a motion-activated alarms and cameras.

## PREVENTING UNAUTHORIZED ENTRY

The following tips suggest how to prevent unauthorized entry to your business. They deal with doors, locks, windows, security gates and shutters, other openings, and roofs. Make sure that all protective measures installed meet the fire and life safety standards for your type of building. You can contact the San Diego Fire Department's Fire and Hazard Prevention Services at **(619) 533-4400** for assistance. This will assure safety and code compliance as well as enhance your security.

### Doors

Doors can be wood, metal or glass. Solid wood doors should be at least 1-3/4 inches thick.

- Reinforce wooden doors with 16-gauge sheet metal for added security. Or install metal doors.
- Install wooden doors in metal frames. Where locks and hinges are fairly strong, a wood frame is relatively weak, which makes it easy for a burglar to kick in the door. A door in a steel frame can't be kicked in.
- Mount a steel reinforcing device on the lock side of the frame if a metal door frame cannot be installed. It should extend well above and below the strike plate.
- Use a burglar-resistant material that meets UL 972 standards in glass doors. These materials look like safety glass but will not shatter easily, even after repeated blows. Or attach a security film to the inside and frame of unprotected glass to make it burglar-resistant. Both require repeated blows to break through, which take time and make noise. A burglar faced with this task might give up and go away or look for another way or place to break in. The following materials can be used:
  - *Laminated glass* is made with a vinyl or plastic inter-layer sandwiched between two layers of glass.
  - *Tempered glass* is made by placing a piece of regular glass in an oven, bringing it almost to the melting point, and then chilling it rapidly. This causes a skin to form around the glass. Fully tempered glass is four to five times stronger than regular glass.
  - *Wired glass* adds the benefit of a visible deterrent. Extra effort will be needed to break the glass and then cut through the wire located within the glass in order to gain entry.
  - *Plastic acrylics* are more than ten times stronger than glass of the same thickness and are commonly called Plexiglas.
  - *Polycarbonate* sheets are superior to acrylics and are advertised as 250 times more impact resistant than safety glass, and 20 more times than other transparent plastic.
  - *Glass with a security film attached to the inside and the frame* can also be burglar-resistant.
- Install a 180-degree peephole in solid doors so you can identify persons at the door without them seeing you. It also enables you to check that no one is hiding near the door before it's opened, e.g., to take out trash.
- Hinges should be located on the inside or have non-removable pins. If on the outside use hinges with studs that prevent the hinge leaves from being slid apart with the pin removed

### Locks

Doorknob locks offer no security. Defeating these locks is one of the most common means of forced entry. And they are no longer ADA-compliant in new construction. Go to a locksmith or hardware store for advice on locks.

- Where sensors are installed to open or unlock egress doors from the inside when a person approaches the door, make sure they are aimed far enough back from the door so a person outside the door cannot slip something between the door and the frame of a single door or between the doors in a set of double doors to create motion or a heat signature on the inside and thereby open a door. One way to prevent this is to install a shield on the outside of the door so a person cannot slip anything between the door and the frame or between the doors. Another is to replace the sensor with a button that would be pushed to open the door from the inside. In this case backup power would have to be available to keep the door(s) locked and enable the button to work during a power outage.
- On a door that opens on the inside with a lever arm or press bar, make sure there is no gap under it through which a lever-opening tool like the Keedex K-22 can be inserted. This tool has a curved wire that can be inserted under the door and raised to hook over the arm or bar on the inside of the door. The wire is then pulled to rotate the arm or bar down and open the door without leaving any sign of a forced entry. Unless the door has a separate deadbolt as suggested below, the gap should be closed with a threshold strip attached to the floor

under the door and a brush sweep attached to the bottom of the door. Or a shield could be attached to the inside of the door to surround the lever arm or press bar and prevent the wire of a lever opening tool from hooking them.

- When business occupancy is less than 50 persons separate single-cylinder deadbolts can be used on egress doors that open with lever arms to prevent the door from being opened if the lever arm on the outside is broken off and to prevent the door from being opened by a lever-opening tool. These locks would be key-operated on the outside and have a thumb turn on the inside. They can only be used when the business is unoccupied. A sign must be posted above or adjacent to the door saying THIS DOOR TO REMAIN UNLOCKED WHEN BUILDING IS OCCUPIED per *California Fire Code* Sec. 1008.1.9.3.
- Deadbolt locks should have a minimum throw of 1 inch. Their strike plates should have screws that are at least 3 inches long. And they should be resistant to “bumping.”
- Install latch guards. They are steel plates that are bolted to doors to prevent them from being opened with a tool that is inserted between the door and the frame to push in a beveled latch. They also prevent objects from being inserted between the door and the frame that could damage the door itself. More expensive guards protect the mortise cylinder and prevent a burglar from drilling out the tumblers.
- On single doors that open on the inside with a push bar make sure there is no gap between the door and the frame through which an L-shaped tool can be inserted next to the bar, turned 90 degrees to contact the push bar, and pulled to depress the bar. A gap can be closed by a metal strip attached to the door like a latch guard.
- On double doors that open on the inside with push bars make sure there is no gap between the doors through which an L- or T-shaped tool can be inserted next to the bars, turned 90 degrees to contact a push bar, and pulled to depress a bar. A gap can be closed by attaching a strip of metal or some other material to one door.
- Install flush bolts at the top and bottom of all double doors. These should be made of steel and have a minimum throw of 1 inch.
- Secure sliding-glass doors to prevent both horizontal and vertical movement. Deadbolt locks provide the greatest security. Less effective secondary locking devices include a pin in the upper track that extends downward through the inner doorframe and into the outer door frame, a thumbscrew-type lock mounted on the top or bottom track, and a metal strip or a few metal screws in the track above the door to prevent vertical movement.
- Re-key or change all locks when moving into a new location.
- Install good locks on gates, garages, sheds, etc. If padlocks are used, they should be keyed and able to survive assaults by bolt cutters or pry bars. The shackles should be of hardened steel and at least 9/32 inch thick. It is even better to use a shielded- or hidden-shackle padlock that is designed to protect against bolt cutters. Combination locks should not be used because they offer very poor security.
- Use a multi-frequency opener on electrically-operated garage doors, and make sure that the bottom of the door cannot be lifted up to allow a burglar to crawl in.
- Use hardened steel hinges, hasps, and shielded padlocks on hand-lifted garage doors.
- Install cane bolts or sliding hasps on the inside of garage doors to provide additional security.
- Consider installing a crossbar as an additional locking mechanism on egress doors that have an interior swing. Place a metal bar or 2- x 4-inch piece of wood in brackets mounted on both side of a door. Slide bolts of heavy gauge steel can also be effective.
- Use panic deadbolts operated by push-bars to secure egress doors that are designated for emergency use only. They can be alarmed to ring a bell or sound a horn when the door is opened.

## Windows

Do not rely on the locking means supplied with your windows. Additional security measures are usually necessary.

- Secure double-hung sash windows by drilling a hole that slants downward through a top corner of the bottom window into the bottom corner of the top window on both sides of the window. Place an eyebolt or nail in the hole to prevent the window from being opened.
- Replace louver windows with solid glass or some other type of ventilating window. If this cannot be done, glue the panes together with a two-part epoxy resin.
- Secure casement windows with key-locking latches. Make sure that the protrusion on the window that the lock is attached to is made of steel and not worn, and that the window closes properly and is not bowed or warped.
- Secure sliding-glass windows by the same types of locking devices used for sliding-glass doors.
- Consider installing security bars on side, rear, or other windows that a burglar might break to enter your

business. Make sure that the retaining bolts cannot be removed from the outside. Bars must comply with Fire Code requirements for inside release to permit an occupant to escape in the event of a fire.

- Use burglar-resistant glass or attach a burglar-resistant film inside and frame of unprotected display windows to prevent window-smash burglaries.
- Eliminate small windows at ground level that a burglar can break and crawl through, especially where there are low bushes in front of the windows. Or use burglar-resistant glass, a burglar-resistant film attached to the inside and frame of unprotected windows, or some strong opaque or reflective material in them.
- Install bollards in front of windows and doors to prevent vehicles from driving in.

### **Security Gates and Shutters**

Folding security gates and roll-down shutters inside windows and doors provide additional security. A burglar would have to cut through the bars or slats after breaking through a window or door to enter the business all while the alarm is going off. The presence of gates or shutters would be a strong deterrent of break-ins.

### **Other Openings**

All crawl spaces, ventilation windows, and other openings should be secured to prevent access through them.

- Make sure that window air conditioners are installed securely and cannot easily be removed from the outside.
- Seal mail slots in doors if a coat hanger or other device can be inserted and used to release the door lock.
- Secure or alarm hollow walls or attics that are shared with an adjoining business.

### **Roofs**

Ladders, trees, fences, drain pipes, and adjoining rooftops can provide roof access if measures are not taken to deny such access.

- Install locked security guards on ladders.
- Trim tree limbs that could provide access.
- Secure rooftop skylights, ventilation shafts, air conditioning and heating ducts, and other possible entry points on the inside with grilles or grates. Those that cannot be secured should be alarmed.

If anything of value is located on the roof, e.g., air conditioning units with copper tubing, or if your building can be entered by a burglar cutting or drilling a hole in the roof, consider installing a motion detector that would sound an alarm, turn on lights, and call your burglar alarm company if someone goes on the roof. Also consider installing a camera that would record when motion is detected.

### **Fences, Walls, and Gates**

Well-built fences, walls, and gates are the first line of defense against criminals. The permissible heights and locations of various types of fences are specified in the San Diego Municipal Code (SDMC).

- Install open chain link or ornamental metal fencing unless privacy and noise reduction are needed. These types are preferred because they do not block visibility into the property and are less susceptible to graffiti. Chain link fencing should have its bottom secured with tension wire or galvanized pipe, or embedded in concrete to prevent it from being lifted up to enable a person to crawl in. The horizontal bars on ornamental metal fences should be located only at the top and bottom on the inside of the fence. Fences should be at least 6 feet high.
- Sharp-pointed fencing is only permitted in agricultural zones but in special situations it may be allowed to exist in industrial zones.
- Equip gates with good locks. Latches should be mounted with carriage bolts and nuts that are welded on or secured by stripped bolt threads.
- Gates that are opened on the inside by a handle or knob should have shields that prevent a person from reaching in to open them. They should also be tall enough so that a person cannot reach over the top to open them.
- Gates with beveled latches should be shielded so a person cannot insert a wire or bar between the frame and the

gate and push in the latch. The shield should also be centered on the latch. A dead-bolt lock with a cylindrical latch would be even better on gates that are not emergency exits and locked manually from the outside.

- Gates that are opened on the inside by a push or press bar should be solid or have a solid metal or plastic shield on the inside of the gate that extends at least two feet above and below the bar. The shield will prevent a person from opening the gate from the outside by looping a wire through the gate and pulling on its ends to depress the bar.
- Exit gates should have springs that close them securely after a person goes through. Sensors should also be installed to warn the security office or manager that a gate has been left open.

## **Landscaping**

Defensive plants can help in access control.

- Plant bushes with thorns or prickly leaves under ground-level windows to make access more difficult for burglars.
- Plant bushes with thorns or prickly leaves along fences and walls to make climbing more difficult and prevent graffiti.

## **DETERRING CRIMES**

Crimes can be deterred by having good visibility in the business and on the premises, alarm systems, surveillance cameras, security personnel, dogs, and good lighting, and keeping the property in good condition, posting signs, etc.

### **Visibility**

Good visibility in and around the business creates a risk of detection for intruders and offenders, and a perception of safety for persons legitimately on the premises.

- Provide two-way visibility in areas open to the public. Keep windows and counters clear. Don't allow them to be cluttered with signs, displays, plants, etc. For businesses that sell alcoholic beverages the California Business and Professions Code Sec. 25612.5(c)(7) states that "No more than 33 percent of the square footage of the windows and clear doors of an off-sale premises shall bear advertising or signs of any sort, and all advertising and signage shall be placed and maintained in a manner that ensures that law enforcement personnel have a clear and unobstructed view of the interior of the premises, including the area in which the cash registers are maintained, from the exterior public sidewalk or entrance to the premises."
- Provide one-way visibility from the inside in areas not open to the public. Use mirrored glass or see-through curtains to maintain inside privacy. Use glare-proof glass to enable occupants of a lighted building to see out at night.
- Install convex mirrors to enable employees to see people in areas that might be blocked by display shelves, walls, or other obstructions.

### **Alarms**

Install a good alarm system. One will usually include one or more of the following components: magnetic contacts on doors and windows, photocell or pressure sensors with annunciators at unlocked or open doors, heat or motion detectors in interior spaces, glass break detectors, keypads with a means of checking the status of the system, and audible alarms. All equipment should be UL certified.

- Multiple sensors are preferred because they reduce false alarms, which are wasteful of police resources and lead to fines and permit revocation.
- See SDMC Secs. 33.3701-33.3723 for burglary alarm business and agent requirements and responsibilities, alarm user permit requirements, etc. Call SDPD Permits and Licensing at **(619) 531-2250** about obtaining an alarm permit.
- Get alarm company references from other businesses. Get at least three estimates in writing. The SDPD does not prefer or recommend companies, brands, or types of security systems.
- Make sure the alarm company has a City Business Tax Certificate and is licensed by the State of California.

You can verify the latter by calling the State of California Bureau of Security and Investigative Services at **(916) 322-4000** or going online at <http://www.dca.ca.gov/bsis>.

- If your system is monitored, make sure the monitoring station is open 24/7 and has backup power. The company's customer service department should also be open 24/7.
- Make sure you understand your service contract, all the points of protection and the equipment to be installed, the initial and monthly payments, and the warranty period.
- Inform your insurance company. You may qualify for a discount.
- Harden the telephone line that sends the alarm signal to the alarm company so it cannot be cut from the outside. And if it is cut, have the system send an alarm to the alarm company. If the telephone line is contained in an outside box, the box should be alarmed or locked with a shielded- or hidden-shackle padlock. Or the system could have a wireless backup that would send the alarm if the telephone wire is cut.
- The system should also have a fail-safe battery backup. Check the batteries periodically and replace them if necessary.
- Test the system periodically to make sure it works properly. Have it inspected and checked at least annually.
- Develop procedures for turning the alarm on and off to avoid false alarms. The last person to leave the business should turn the system on and the first person to arrive in the morning should turn it off. Then when workers come in at night or on days when the business is closed they will have to turn the system off when they enter and on when they leave.
- When an alarm occurs the alarm company will call your business or a person designated to receive the call. It will call the **911** if it gets no answers or the person answering the call has the correct code word(s) and says to call the **911**. The responding officers will check for a sign of a forced entry. If none is found and all the doors are locked, they will leave. They will not enter the building. In the meantime the alarm may still be going off and the burglars may still be inside. To prevent this you or your alarm company also need to respond to the call. If you arrive before the officers you should wait for them to arrive and then let them in to investigate the alarm. (You should not go in by yourself because the burglars may still be inside.) If you arrive after the officers have left, you can call to have them return. Alternatively, if your alarm company provides a response service you can provide it with a means of getting into your business so it can investigate the alarm or wait for officers to arrive and let them in to conduct an investigation. In any case, you or your alarm company should respond to all alarm signals. Don't assume a signal is a false alarm. Burglars could be testing or interfering with your line. Never let alarm signals, telephone trouble, or other disturbances go unexplained.

Consider adding sound detectors or cameras to an alarm system so the alarm can be verified. When triggered, they will raise the priority of the alarm call to that of a crime in progress and lead to a faster response time.

## Cameras

Criminals may be deterred from committing a crime if they know that their actions are recorded on a camera. Or they may be prevented from committing a crime if preventative measures can be taken soon after they are observed entering your property or business.

- Install cameras to record people entering and leaving the business, and committing a crime in the business.
- Mount cameras where they cannot be covered or tampered with. They should be vandal-resistant and have armored conduits for their wiring. Dummy cameras should not be used because most criminals can tell the difference between real cameras and dummies.
- Observe what is happening outside your place of the business. Look for anyone watching or loitering near it.
- Install cameras to record people and vehicles in your parking lot.
- Install video analytics or intelligent video software in your camera system. It will alert personnel with monitors when something suspicious occurs so the monitors don't have to be watched all the time. The monitors could be located at your business or at a security company office. In the latter case a secure, password-protected Internet link would be used to transmit the imagery. **911** would be called if a crime in progress is observed and the dispatcher given the details. Officers might even arrive in time to catch the perpetrators. If something suspicious is seen, it should be reported to the SDPD on its non-emergency number, **(619) 531-2000** or **(858) 484-3154**.
- If your business also has a burglary or robbery alarm, the camera can be activated on an alarm and its imagery transmitted to the alarm company so personnel there can see what is happening. This will lead to a higher call priority and a faster response than would occur for an unverified alarm call. Officers might even arrive in time



to catch the perpetrators.

- Lights could be turned on when motion is detected in outside areas that are secured at night, and audio announcements made to warn trespassers that the police would be called if they do not leave the property immediately.
- Signs regarding cameras help to deter crimes. If the cameras are not monitored all the time, signs should use words like CAMERAS ARE ON THE PREMISES, SURVEILLANCE IS IN PROGRESS, or ALL ACTIVITIES ARE RECORDED TO AID IN THE PROSECUTION OF CRIMES COMMITTED ON THE PREMISES. Don't use words like "security," "protection," or "monitoring" because they can give people a false sense of security by expecting timely help if they are threatened or attacked, or that they and their property are somehow being protected by the cameras.

Cameras inside your business can also be used to defend staff members against false claims of misconduct by customers. For example in the "forgotten purse" scam a customer would reenter the store without a purse, ask for the purse she left on the checkout counter, and accuse the cashier of taking it when it wasn't there. The video of the transaction area clearly showed the woman taking the purse with her.

Businesses with cameras take record people entering the store should keep a file of pictures of people who are known or suspected shoplifters. These pictures could be shared with other businesses in the area so employees can learn to recognize these people and watch them closely if they come into their store in the future.

## **Security Personnel**

A business can hire its own security personnel or contract with a security company for security services. Uniformed security personnel that patrol the business on foot can be a highly effective in deterring robberies and burglaries as well as shoplifting.

A business that hires its own security personnel must register with and obtain a Proprietary Private Security Employer (PSE) license from the California Bureau of Security and Investigative Services (CBSIS). It can then hire and train persons who have registered with the CBSIS and have valid Proprietary Private Security Officer (PSO) licenses. A person must pass a criminal history check by the California Department of Justice and the FBI to obtain this license. The PSE must obtain authorization from the CBSIS to provide the initial 16-hour and continuing-education PSO training.

A business that contracts for private security services would deal with a Private Patrol Operator (PPO), who must register with the CBSIS and obtain a PPO license, for which there are numerous requirements. The PPO would provide Security Guards for the security services. Security Guards must also be licensed by the CBSIS. They will need to pass a criminal history check and complete a 40-hour training course.

## **Dogs**

Dogs act mainly as a psychological deterrent. They can be an excellent supplement to a security system provided the animal can be relied upon to give warning when warning is needed. Dogs can scare a stranger away by either barking or looking fierce. But remember that they can be lured away, poisoned, killed, or even stolen. Trained attack dogs are not recommended because the risk of liability to the owner is great should the dog attack an innocent person. Outside dogs should be kept in a fenced area with a good lock on the gate.

## **Lighting**

Illuminate all external areas of your property at night, especially parking lots and storage yards. And leave a few interior lights on in the back of the store or office where they may illuminate and silhouette intruders but not create glare for passing patrol cars.

- Timers or photoelectric cells can be used to turn lights on at dusk and off at dawn. And motion sensors can be used to turn lights on when any motion is detected. Streetlights or lights from adjoining properties should not be relied on for lighting the property at night. Also, the lights should be directed so they don't shine into the eyes of

passing motorists or police patrols.

- Replace burnt-out bulbs promptly. Use screens, wired glass covers, or other protection for light fixtures and bulbs.
- Because lights and other security systems work on electrical power it is important that measures be taken to prevent disruption of external power or provide internal backup power. At a minimum, external circuit breakers should be installed in a sturdy box that is locked with a shielded- or hidden-shackle padlock.
- Trim trees and bushes so they do not block lighting.

## **Property Condition**

Keep your property in good condition. Criminals are attracted to property in poor condition because it shows that the owners or tenants don't care about it.

- Keep property free of trash, litter, weeds, leaves, dismantled or inoperative vehicles, and other things that indicate neglect.
- Replace or repair broken windows, screens, fences, and gate locks.
- Remove loose rocks and other objects that could be used to vandalize your property.
- Keep outside trash dumpster enclosures and the dumpsters in them locked when not being filled or emptied.
- Use graffiti-resistant paint or anti-graffiti coatings on the sides of the building and any other design features that could be vandalized. The San Diego Park and Recreation Dept. specifies the use of anti-graffiti materials manufactured by Monopole Inc. Four coats are applied. The first is Aquaseal ME12 (Item 5200). The second is Permashield Base (Item 6100). The third and fourth are Permashield Premium (Item 5600 for matte finish or Item 5650 for gloss finish).
- Remove graffiti as soon as possible after it is found. This will discourage further vandalism. The graffiti should be covered with matching paint so a "canvas" is not left for the vandals. Hardware or paint stores should be consulted regarding the best products for removing various types of graffiti from specific surfaces without damaging the surface. Extreme care should be used in applying special graffiti removal products like MEK (Methyl Ethyl Ketone) or "Graffiti Remover" on glass or unpainted surfaces.
- Attach a protective film on the outside of windows to prevent window damage from graffiti, knife gouging of scratching, and acid etching.
- Keep landscaping trimmed to preserve good visibility on the property and deny criminals possible hiding places. Trim bushes to less than 3 feet, especially near windows, sidewalks, and entrance and exit doors. Trim tree canopies to at least 8 feet.
- Use fencing, gates, landscaping, pavement treatment, signs, etc. to define clear boundaries between your property and adjoining properties.

## **Signs**

Signs should be posted to prohibit trespassing, loitering, unauthorized parking, and other crimes and misconduct.

- NO TRESPASSING signs on privately operated business premises should cite SDMC Sec. 52.80.01.
- If a Letter of Agency has been filed with the SDPD the property should be posted with NO TRESPASSING signs stating that a Letter of Agency has been filed and giving the address of the property, the name and phone number of the property owner or manager, and the non-emergency SDPD phone number to report suspicious activities. That number is **(619) 531-2000** or **(858) 484-3154**. The signs should be at least 18 by 24 inches in size, have a font visible from the nearest public street, not be accessible to vandals, and be posted on the entrances and spaced evenly on the boundaries of the property. A sample sign is also available in the FORMS AND PERMITS section of the SDPD website.
- NO LOITERING signs on private property should cite PC 647(h). In this subdivision "loiter" means to delay or linger without a lawful purpose for being on the property and for the purpose of committing a crime as opportunity may be discovered.
- Signs stating that public parking is prohibited (or that parking is only for customers) and that unauthorized vehicles will be removed at the owner's expense must contain the telephone number of the local traffic law enforcement agency, and the name and telephone number of each towing company that is a party to a written towing authorization agreement with the property owner or manager. The SDPD number for towing impounds is **(619) 531-2844**. These signs must be displayed in plain view at all entrances to the property. They must be at

least 17 by 22 inches in size and have lettering that is at least one inch high. These sign requirements are specified in California Vehicle Code Sec. 22658(a)(1), which should be cited on the sign.

- Signs stating that unauthorized vehicles parked in designated accessible spaces not displaying placards or special license plates issue for persons with disabilities will be towed away at the owners expense, must also contain the address where the towed vehicles may be reclaimed or the telephone number of the local traffic law enforcement agency. The SDPD number for towing impounds is **(619) 531-2844**. Other requirements for these signs are specified in California Vehicle Code Sec. 22511.8.
- Post a Neighborhood or Business Watch or alarm company sticker on entry doors and windows.
- Post a code of conduct in patios and other outside areas open to the public. It should state that persons engaged in prohibited conduct will be asked to leave the property, and that failure to cease the conduct or leave the property will result in a call to the SDPD. Prohibited conduct would include: trespassing, fighting, threatening others, panhandling, vandalism, skateboarding, littering, soliciting, loitering, illegal lodging, prowling, loud noise or music, consumption of alcoholic beverages, drug activities, etc.
- If your store has a retail package off-sale alcoholic beverage license to sell alcoholic beverages it must post signs stating that **OPEN ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTAINERS ARE PROHIBITED ON THE PREMISES**, as required by SDMC Sec. 56.56(b). These signs must be clearly visible to patrons of the licensee and parking lot and to persons on the public sidewalk immediately adjacent to the licensed premises, and should cite SDMC Sec. 56.56(a). This prohibition also applies to the public sidewalk immediately adjacent to the licensed premises. Signs along the sidewalks that prohibit consumption of alcoholic beverages should cite SDMC Sec. 56.54.

## **APPREHENDING ROBBERS**

- Observe carefully all suspicious persons or vehicles so you can provide a good description of them if they commit a crime. Be aware that criminals might be using physical disguises, e.g., wigs, mustaches, etc.
- Place colored height marks at all egress doors to help employees estimate the height of suspicious persons.
- Develop a mutual aid system. Form an agreement with nearby merchants to keep an eye on each other's businesses and watch for suspicious activities. An inexpensive buzzer system can alert adjoining businesses of an emergency situation.
- Install cameras that can provide good imagery of persons entering and leaving the business, and committing a crime in the business. The imagery quality should enable the criminal to be identified.
- Monitor cameras to enable crimes in progress to be observed and reported, and actions taken to stop and apprehend the criminals before they can escape.
- Use "bait money." Keep a list of serial and series numbers. Do not use these bills to make change.
- Install silent panic alarm buttons at cashier and other vulnerable positions.
- Install two sets of doors and a remote locking system to enable an escaping criminal to be trapped between them.
- Make address numbers easy to read from the street to avoid delays in police response. They must be on a contrasting background and located above the doorway or in a position where they are plainly visible and legible from either direction of approach from the street fronting the property. They must be at least 12 inches high on commercial buildings and should be lighted at night. Additional numbers are required on the rear doors so they can be seen from alleys.
- Where address numbers are not easily visible from the street, e.g., for businesses in a shopping mall, additional numbers should be posted where they will be visible.

## **RECOVERING STOLEN PROPERTY**

- Place the name of the business or some identification number on all business-owned items, e.g., office equipment, electronics, etc. This can be done by engraving or etching, using a permanent adhesive, or by attaching microdots. The owner's driver license number preceded by "CA" is suggested as a property identifier.
  - Contractors can get information on preventing thefts of construction equipment and recovering stolen equipment by calling the Construction Industry Crime Prevention Program at **(562) 860-9006** or visiting its website at **[www.crimepreventionprogram.com](http://www.crimepreventionprogram.com)**. They can also obtain an Owner Applied Number (OAN) for large vehicles and heavy equipment. This number is usually stamped or engraved on your property and stored in a database in the National Crime Information Center (NCIC). Property with your OAN on it can be returned to you if it is recovered after being stolen. For an application, go to the website of the Agricultural Crime Technology Information and Operations Network (ACTION) at **[www.agcrime.net](http://www.agcrime.net)**, click on REQUEST

PUBLICATION, and download the brochure entitled *What is an OAN?* On the same website you can get additional information about OANs by clicking on TIPS TO PREVENT A CRIME, and then click on Owner Applied Number under PREVENT A CRIME ON YOUR PROPERTY.

- Keep a detailed, up-to-date record of your valuables. Include type, model, serial number, fair market value, etc. Photograph or videotape all valuables.

## WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE ROBBED

Every robbery is different. You will need to assess yourself, the robber, and the situation to determine what you should do. Here are some general tips to use in training your employees:

- Act calmly. Do exactly what the robber says. Keep your movements short and smooth to avoid startling the robber.
- Do not resist. Cooperate for you own safety and the safety of others. Robbers usually are excited and easily provoked. Tell the robber about any movements you plan to make.
- Activate an alarm if it can be done safely without alerting the robber.
- Observe carefully. Study the robber's face and clothing, note any other distinguishing features, observe the direction of escape, record the license, make, and color of any vehicle used in the robbery, etc. Write down everything you can remember about the robber and the crime itself.
- Lock the door and call **911** immediately after the robber leaves. Then you can make other calls.
- Preserve the scene. Discontinue regular business until officers have searched the scene. Cover any surfaces the robber may have touched and keep away from areas where the robber may have been.
- Ask other witnesses to remain. Get their names and phone numbers if they are unable to remain. Ask to see their driver licenses or other ID to verify this information.
- Save camera imagery records.
- Don't discuss the robbery with others until all statements have been taken.

## SDPD AREA STATIONS

|              |                                 |                |
|--------------|---------------------------------|----------------|
| Central      | 2501 Imperial Ave. SD 92102     | (619) 744-9500 |
| Eastern      | 9225 Aero Dr. SD 92123          | (858) 495-7900 |
| Mid-City     | 4310 Landis St. SD 92105        | (619) 516-3000 |
| Northeastern | 13396 Salmon River Rd. SD 92129 | (858) 538-8000 |
| Northern     | 4275 Eastgate Mall SD 92037     | (858) 552-1700 |
| Northwestern | 12592 El Camino Real SD 92130   | (858) 523-7000 |
| Southeastern | 7222 Skyline Dr. SD 92114       | (619) 527-3500 |
| Southern     | 1120 27th St. SD 92154          | (619) 424-0400 |
| Western      | 5215 Gaines St. SD 92110        | (619) 692-4800 |